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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA IMMEDIATE 5092

RUEHJB/AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA IMMEDIATE 1865

RUEHAS/AMEMBASSY ALGIERS IMMEDIATE 2326

RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA IMMEDIATE 7157

INFO AFRICAN UNION COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE

RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI IMMEDIATE 0200

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 STATE 134421

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL PGOV KPKO SO

SUBJECT: SOMALIA - REINFORCING AMISOM

REF: ADDIS ABABA 3426

¶1. (U) This is an action request, please see paragraph 2.

OBJECTIVES

¶2. (SBU) Ambassadors are asked to approach host governments at the highest appropriate level to pursue the following objective:

-- Establish firm host government commitments to deploy an (additional) battalion to reinforce the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in the wake of Ethiopia's withdrawal from Somalia, tentatively planned for January 5, 2009.

-- Determine the level of equipment and other logistical support that will be necessary in order for host government to deploy to Somalia.

-- Inform host government of the USG timeline necessary to provide equipment to forces deploying to Somalia.

BACKGROUND

¶3. (U) On December 22, the African Union's Peace and Security Council (PSC) agreed to extend AMISOM's current mandate for two months, effective 16 January, 2009, and also asked the AU Commission to work closely with the Government of Ethiopia to ensure that the planned withdrawal of Ethiopian forces from Somalia is closely coordinated with AMISOM to avoid a security vacuum. Council members noted the readiness of Uganda, Burundi, and Nigeria to deploy one battalion each to AMISOM, subject to salary support, equipment, and logistical support. While the USG could provide equipment and logistical support, it does not pay salaries. The Department is currently working with the EU to support the salaries of the three additional battalions. It was also reported in an earlier donor, meeting that Algeria had offered 10 aircraft to assist AU troop contributors with deploying their contingents to Mogadishu.

TALKING POINTS

¶4. (SBU) Embassies Kampala and Bujumbura may wish to draw from the following suggested talking points:

-- We have been following closely the events in Addis over the past several days and wish to coordinate with you over the reinforcement of AMISOM.

-- Your government has indicated its willingness to deploy a trained 850-man battalion to AMISOM. We commend your offer

to send (additional) troops and are ready to assist your government by providing urgent equipment items and logistical support to this battalion. Our equipment funds are limited, and the USG may not be able to provide all of the requested equipment.

-- Providing equipment for your designated battalion prior to the Ethiopian withdrawal date of 5 January will be problematic for us. Our contractors require 3-4 months to procure many types of peacekeeping equipment. Vehicles, in particular, are difficult for our contractors to procure quickly.

-- We are prepared, however, to deploy any forces that your government is willing to deploy before the full delivery of all USG-procured equipment. While this is not an optimal solution, we believe that our contractors may have sufficient contract aircraft available to move your troops into Mogadishu beginning the first week of January. Equipment for the partially equipped battalion can be delivered to Mogadishu piecemeal over the following 4 months.

15. (SBU) Embassy Abuja may wish to draw from the following suggested talking points:

-- We have been following closely the events in Addis over the past several days and wish to coordinate with you over

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the reinforcement of AMISOM.

-- Your government has indicated its willingness to deploy a trained 850-man battalion to AMISOM. We commend your offer to send troops to AMISOM and are ready to assist your government by providing up to \$3 million in urgent equipment items, as well as logistical support, to this battalion.

-- Providing equipment for your designated battalion prior to the Ethiopian withdrawal date of 5 January will be problematic for us. Our contractors require 3-4 months to procure many types of peacekeeping equipment. Vehicles, in particular, are difficult for our contractors to procure quickly.

-- We are prepared, however, to deploy any forces that your government is willing to deploy before the full delivery of all USG-procured equipment. While this is not an optimal solution, we believe that our contractors may have sufficient contract aircraft available to move your troops into Mogadishu beginning the first week of January. Equipment for the partially equipped battalion can be delivered to Mogadishu piecemeal over the following 4 months.

16. (SBU) Embassy Algiers may use the following:

-- It has been reported to us that your government has offered to assist with the airlift of additional troop contingents to AMISOM.

-- We are currently engaging the Governments of Uganda, Burundi, and Nigeria to each send an additional 850-man infantry battalion.

-- We request that you make available the required number of aircraft, aircrew, and fuel to move these additional battalions to Mogadishu as early as the first week of January.

REPORTING DEADLINE

17. (U) The Department greatly appreciates Posts' assistance and engagement on this issue. Please report results of this effort via front-channel cable to AF/RSA Mike Skardon no later than Tuesday, December 30.

POINT OF CONTACT

¶8. (U) Please contact AF/RSA Mike Skardon (o: 202-647-7371 or h:703-477-5321) or via e-mail for any further background information or argumentation needed to meet our objectives.

RICE